



# Patapsco Tributary

The Program Newsletter for Patapsco Valley State Park



Volume 2  
Issue 9



Fall  
&  
Winter 2010

## National Trail Day 2010 a HUGE success at Patapsco!

By: Maegan Cooper

Saturday, June 5, 2010 was designated National Trails Day (NTD). NTD is an annual event first launched by the American Hiking Society in 1993 and is a nationwide celebration of trails. Each year thousands of people participate in NTD events, helping to bring greater awareness of trails through hikes, trail maintenance, dedications, and many other activities.

This year, in honor of NTD, Patapsco Valley State Park held the largest volunteer trail work event in park history! Over 200 volunteers descended upon the McKeldin and Avalon/Orange Grove areas of the park to provide over 800 hours of service towards our trail system. Volunteers worked on 16 different projects, including stream clean-ups, invasive plant removal, trail re-routes, construction of stairs and retaining walls, trail drainage, and trail blazing.

Ranger Amy Lutsko, Patapsco's fearless trail supervisor, planned all the projects and worked with crew leaders provided by MORE (Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts), the Friends of Patapsco Valley and Heritage Greenway, Trail Conservancy, Inc., park staff, and veteran trail work volunteers. REI facilitated registration for the event through the Timonium and College Park websites and provided free shirts, breakfast snacks, and lunch for everyone involved. Park Manager, Captain Robin Melton, Assistant Park Manager, Ranger Steve McCoy, and the Maryland Park Service State-wide Volunteer Coordinator, Larry Martin came out to thank the volunteers for their dedication to Patapsco's trails and to show their support for the event. Even the weather cooperated as the first raindrops fell as the tents were taken down!

Patapsco would not be the park we love without the outstanding support given to us by our volunteers. With over 70 miles of maintained trails, this one day event put a huge dent in the work required to keep our trails safe and enjoyable for hikers, bikers, and equestrians! Our volunteers proved that they are willing to get dirty to sustain the trails we all enjoy with our family and friends.



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## *Robin's Nest*

by Ranger Captain Robin Melton, Park Manager

I marvel each day at how many different activities people are engaging in when they visit Patapsco Valley State Park. Mother Nature provides the setting, along with some added amenities from the Park Service for a smorgasbord of activities. I am using the term “smorgasbord” intentionally because when I think of a smorgasbord I think of an opportunity to try many new foods that I would never taste otherwise, and in State Parks people often feel safe to try new sports, new activities with the help of a naturalist or an outfitter, who is a resource-based recreation partner, or even on their own with a self guided activity. This brings all levels of enthusiasts, many different types of activities, to one natural setting. While many of these activities never cross paths with another, some activities occur in the same place or feature within the park. Let me share an example: Most of our trails at Patapsco are considered to be multi-use trails. On these trails you will find mountain bikers, hikers, horseback riders, dog sledgers (with wheels). There is basic yield etiquette for trail users. Bikers yield to horses and hikers, horses yield to hikers, and hikers have the primary right of way. This general trail etiquette has been put in place to help with guest interactions. It works very well when followed and when there is communication between the various trail users. If a hiker encountering a horseback rider, for example communicates with the horseback rider often these interactions go very smoothly.

In just one recent weekend I encountered people hiking, biking, horseback riding, fishing, tubing, bird watching, rock climbing, geocaching, trail running, puddle stomping, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, road biking, picnicking, and exercising. I encountered all of these folks in one area of the park. Each person came to the park for different reasons and with different skill levels for the activity they planned to engage in. Anytime you have many activities in one area there are bound to be user conflicts. The fisherman who had just settled down in a quiet spot on the river, that appeared to be a probable good hole for that elusive small mouth bass or trout in the spring just cast his line into that perfect spot, when all of a sudden here comes a group of swimmers who jump in the water not ten feet from the fishermen. The bird watcher listening for the sounds of a much sought after bird suddenly encounters a large group of children hiking all describing each unique feature they see to a friend. The kayaker floating down river, who chooses a path right over the top of the sweet fishing hole that a fishermen has been quietly working for the last hour. So how do we solve all these conflicts? I am very fond of a bumper sticker that pops up on cars throughout Howard County – “Choose Civility”. These are two simple words that can make the difference between a bad day and a good day.

On a day where everyone chooses civility the swimmer would choose an area 100 yards up stream of the fisherman to play in the water. The kayaker would choose a path that quietly floated out of the way of the fisherman's sweet spot, quietly acknowledging another person who is enjoying their favorite past time. The fishermen would fish the early morning and the hours around dusk when the swimmers had yet to arrive or had called it a day. The picnicker would remove all their trash following leave no trace practices, so the next visitor could experience the simple clean pleasures of the outdoors. The group of kids would hike the trails sharing the joy of the day, but in hushed tones, so the bird watcher did not miss the sound of the Nuthatch. The hiker searching for peace and solitude would understand that it may not be found near a shelter packed with 100 people enjoying a family reunion.

Managing a State Park is about managing people interactions. While I hope that people will “Choose Civility” I also know that this is not always going to happen. Some times regulations are put in place, which are used to guide how interactions occur in the park and how people should behave. But I am not a big fan of creating rule upon rule to guide every visitor's interaction with another visitor. I would rather each of our guests chose civility and shared an understanding of each others desire to recreate and respected the needs of each park guest as they enjoy their park. So next time you visit to enjoy your favorite park activity, choose civility in all of your encounters, and perhaps that choice will begin to rub off on others.

## **Happy 175th Thomas Viaduct!**

**By: Steve McCoy**



In all its serene beauty, the Patapsco Valley belies a very industrialized past. In stark contrast to the quiet river valley we enjoy today, previous generations experienced a busy, heavily industrialized community. During the 1800's, flour mills powered by the river became the center of commerce for the region. As a result, a highway and railroad system emerged largely to get products from there to Baltimore's markets and harbor.

The Patapsco Valley provided the route of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's (B&O) original main line west, constructed from 1829 onwards. Today this route remains, though much altered, and passing trains are a frequent attraction for park visitors. Many old railroad bridges lie along the valley, as well, but none is more significant and captivating than the Thomas Viaduct.

The Thomas Viaduct spans the Patapsco River and Valley between Relay and Elkridge. Known to be the first multi-span masonry railroad bridge in the United States built on a curve, construction of the bridge commenced on July 4, 1833, and was completed on July 4, 1835.

As part of the B&O Railroad, it was named for the company's first president, Philip E. Thomas. The designer of the stone arch structure was Benjamin F. Latrobe Jr., one of the chief B&O engineers of the early 19th century. During its construction, it was widely believed that the bridge would not hold under the weight of a loaded train, and it became known as "Latrobe's Folly." It soon proved to be one of the sturdiest structures in the nation. In 1964 the Thomas Viaduct was named a National Historic Landmark. It stands today as the world's oldest multiple arch railroad bridge still in use. On July 5, 2010, Patapsco Valley State Park and the Friends of the Patapsco Valley and Heritage Greenway (FPVHG) celebrated the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the completion of the Thomas Viaduct. Over 650 people attended the celebration that included historical exhibits, civil war re-enactors, model train displays, photography exhibitions, entertainment and food. While celebrating this milestone in the history of such a significant structure was reason enough to celebrate, this gathering had a more lasting purpose – to raise awareness and funds for much needed renovations and restoration of the Viaduct.

While CSX, the current owner and operator of the B&O Railroad and Thomas Viaduct, assures that the structure of the bridge is still quite sound – CSX trains and MARC passenger trains routinely travel this line – the rail company is not able to foot the entire bill for the cosmetic renovations and historical restoration the Viaduct so desperately needs. The FPVHG have committed themselves to a fundraising effort over the next two years to help restore this Historical Landmark to its past glory.

The ultimate goal of such restoration includes the creation of an observation area with interpretive exhibits near the Viaduct within the state park, affording visitors the opportunity to safely view the passing trains and catch a glimpse of history. For more information on these efforts to restore and interpret the Thomas Viaduct, visit

<http://www.patapscoheritagegreenway.org/index.html>

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Our Patapsco Valley Pro!  
Professional Disc Golf competitor, Jim Myers

## Super-Fly

By Stephen J. Badger

The Maryland Park Service and Patapsco Valley State Park wish to congratulate park patron and volunteer Jim “No-Spin” Myers on another fantastic performance at this year’s P.D.G.A. Pro Worlds Disc Golf tournament. Competing against top pros from around the world, Jim finished in 3rd place, a mere seven strokes out of the lead.

A yearly fixture for the Professional Disc Golf Association, this year’s five day event was contested at Lemon Lake County Park in Crown Point, Indiana (just south of Chicago). Lemon Lake boasts five individual 18-hole disc golf courses and will soon add two more.

A 32 year veteran of disc golf, Jim has competed in tournaments across the country and internationally. His disc golf resume is lengthy and impressive, highlights include: Seven-Time World Distance Champion, 2000 Pro Worlds Masters Champion, countless P.D.G.A. – Local and National Tour victories, and 49 career aces. He is one of only eight players in the world to qualify for and compete in every United States National Disc Golf Championships ever held. A decade ago, Jim’s successes caught the attention of prominent disc golf equipment manufacturer ‘Innova Disc Golf’, who has been a corporate sponsor ever since.

In addition to his tour success, Jim has always been instrumental in local disc golf promotion. He has contributed to or volunteered at most every disc golf course across the state. He was a key contributor to the design of the “Rockburn Branch Disc Golf Course” in Elkridge, MD.; designed and implemented multiple improvements to “Druid Hill Disc Golf Course” in Baltimore, Md.; and most recently, he designed the “Hot Shots Disc Golf Course” at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station in Lexington Park, MD.

Locally, Jim is best known as the original designer and course pro for Patapsco Valley State Park – McKeldin Area’s disc golf course. Originally designed and funded by Jim and other volunteers in 1995, the course has recently undergone many improvements and continues to serve as a leading example of a world class disc golf course. The course has multiple baskets and pin placements on every hole and features newly redesigned amateur and professional tees. Fairways wind their way through hardwood forests, open grass meadows, and take advantage of the best topographical features of the Patapsco Valley.

Aside from his various volunteer efforts with the park, every winter, Jim organizes the Patapsco Ice-Bowl, a charity disc golf tournament that has raised thousands of dollars to benefit the Maryland Food Bank.

We extend our sincere gratitude for his contributions to the parks and community throughout the years. Thanks again Jim. We’ll see you on the course!

After you play a round at McKeldin, try these other Maryland State Park Disc Golf courses:

### **Seneca Creek State Park**

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/seneca.asp>

### **Tuckahoe State Park**

<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/eastern/tuckahoe.asp>



## Navigating Our Way Through Cyberspace

By : Maegan cooper



When was the last time you sat down and hand-wrote a letter to a friend? If you are like most people, it probably has been a couple of years. The popularity of the internet has declined mail volume so much that this month the U. S. Postal service announced that they want to discontinue Saturday delivery by early 2011. The days of letter writing seem to have phased out of our daily lives just like mullet haircuts and spandex.

Email has become the primary tool for communication among employees to their customers and co-workers. I send numerous emails to park volunteers everyday to get them registered, trained, and signed up for events. By the time I get home I have written so many emails that the last thing I want to do is write wordy emails to catch-up with friends and family and I try to avoid mass email at all costs. So what do I do? I log into my Facebook account and post a sentence or two about my day to my profile and then search the profile of friends and family to see what is new, browse vacation pictures, and re-connect with family, friends, and classmates. Apparently I am not alone. Facebook has over 400 million active users and social network sites (SNS) are a global phenomenon. In Brazil, 80% of the country's population has a profile on a SNS and 2/3 of the world's internet population visits a SNS or a blog everyday! These sites have gained so much popularity that businesses and organizations can no longer ignore the importance of SNS for customer recruitment and service.

Patapsco Valley State Park is no exception. To start our park's journey into Cyberspace and take advantage of all technology has to offer we started with our website. In April 2010, the Department of Natural Resources website got a facelift. Knowing that this was the chance to make our website more user-friendly and informative, park staff worked with Maryland Park Service (MPS) headquarters to tailor the Patapsco webpage with park specific information and features that would help communicate important information to our visitors and volunteers. We wanted the website to be dynamic, providing visitors and volunteers with the most current information possible. Our hard work did not go unnoticed. The park recently received a "Certificate of Commendation" from MPS Superintendent Nita Settina for our "attention to detail and customer service", making our website an "example for all Maryland state parks to emulate"! Park staff is currently working on a few more features for the Soldiers Delight webpage and then will move on to updating the Morgan Run webpage.

Tackling social network sites was the next step. Although Patapsco does not have its own profile on a SNS, the Maryland Park Service does and we are able to submit content to these sites. MPS launched a profile on Facebook in late November 2009 and currently has over 2000 fans. Since April, Patapsco has used the MPS Facebook page to promote our volunteer "Adopt-A-Garden" program and our volunteer photography group. The park received two new Flip cams from the Friends of Patapsco Valley State Park that allowed us to take another step and post on Facebook a video promotion for National Trails Day (NTD). This helped make NTD the biggest volunteer trail event ever in Patapsco with 216 volunteers donating 864 hours to our trail expansive trail system. Afterwards, we posted to Facebook a video montage of volunteers at NTD to say thank you that MPS also posted to YouTube!

In addition to Facebook and YouTube, MPS also has a Twitter profile and is researching the opportunities to join other social network sites. Patapsco intends to keep moving into the future by utilizing all of these resources to promote our park and all the wonderful opportunities people can experience by visiting or volunteering with us. Be sure to look for us the next time you are in Cyberspace!

## Have you been to our Nature Center?

By: Rob Lorens



Located only a few miles from the busy urban city of Baltimore, enjoy the natural oasis of Patapsco Valley State Park. The Nature Center at Hilton is a culmination of the plants and wildlife at Patapsco Valley State Park, Maryland's first state park. The nature center provides the public with natural and cultural history programs through our park's naturalists intended to educate and entertain the modern family. Bring the kids out to enjoy our fully equipped recycled tire playground and stop by the nature center for our FREE daily natural and cultural history programs. Naturalists at Patapsco are more than happy to accommodate your needs in providing programs such as nature hikes through our 70 miles of maintained scenic trails, and in-depth presentations on plants and wildlife at the park. Any specific interests? Just stop by and ask! For hours of operation, contact Park Headquarters at 410-461-5005.

**Remember** to check out the programs and tributary links online on the right hand side of the Patapsco Valley State Park website. This is where you will find a variety of fun and educational programs for your family to enjoy!



### Do you notice anything different about this Tributary?



OUR PROGRAM CALENDER IS MISSING !?!

Do not fret we have not stopped giving you the great programs that you are used to.

You can view our two-month program calendar by simply going to this webpage.

<http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/central/patapsco.asp>

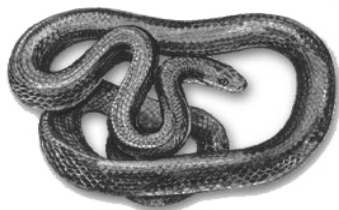
Click on the "Patapsco Programs" to view our program calendar.



SHARE IN THE CARE



# ANIMAL ADOPTION



HELP US HELP OUR WILDLIFE



Scales & Tales is an outreach program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources - Maryland Park Service. Your financial support goes directly towards the care, feeding, and medical needs of animals housed at our aviaries. Through the animal adoption program you can help us continue our educational efforts that promote stewardship and appreciation of wildlife and natural resources.

To say thanks for your generous donation we will send you an animal adoption kit. Adoption Kit includes an adoption certificate, a photo of animal, and a fact sheet.



Golden Eagle \$100    Bald Eagle \$100  
Great Horned Owl \$30    Red-tailed Hawk \$30  
Peregrine Falcon \$20  
Barn Owl \$15    Turkey Vulture \$15    Black Vulture \$15  
Red-shouldered Hawk \$10    Barred Owl \$10  
Eastern Screech Owl \$5    American Kestrel \$5    Mallard Duck \$5  
Turtles \$5    Snakes \$5



## SCALES & TALES ANIMAL ADOPTION PROGRAM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME TO APPEAR ON ADOPTION CERTIFICATE(S): \_\_\_\_\_

I WOULD LIKE TO ADOPT THE CARE OF FOLLOWING ANIMAL(S): \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks and money orders payable to Scales & Tales. Please mail this form and your donation to:  
Scales & Tales 5100 Deer Park Road Owings Mills, MD. 21117 tel 410-922-3044 fax 410-922-8692  
Please allow 2-3 weeks for delivery of your adoption kit.



Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
Patapsco Valley State Park  
8020 Baltimore National Pike  
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Phone: 410-461-5005

Fax: 410-418-9750

Email: [park-patapsco@dnr.state.md.us](mailto:park-patapsco@dnr.state.md.us)



Martin O'Malley, Governor  
John R. Griffin, Secretary



website: [www.dnr.Maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.Maryland.gov)  
Toll-free in MD: 1-877-620-8DNR

### **ONLINE INFORMATION**

The **Patapsco Tributary** is also available on the Patapsco Valley State Park webpage:

**<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/central/patapscovalley.html>**

Visit the DNR website to view the Online Events Calendar & for information on camping reservations, special events, hunting & fishing, and more: **[www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov)**

### **Welcome to the Patapsco Tributary**

The *Tributary* is a park wide program newsletter published twice per year through the cooperative efforts of park staff and volunteers. Your suggestions and/or opinions are welcome and can be delivered to Park Management at the above phone or fax numbers or email address.

#### **Patapsco Valley State Park Hours of Operation:**

Park Headquarters: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. phone 410-461-5005

Scales & Tales: Mon.-Fri. 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. phone 410-461-5005

Soldiers Delight NEA: phone 410-922-3044 (call for Visitor Center hours)

Avalon History Center: phone 410-737-0451 (call for History Center hours)

ALL OTHER AREAS OF THE PARK ARE OPEN FROM 9 AM TO SUNSET

TO MAKE SHELTER OR CAMPING RESERVATIONS CALL:  
1-888-432-CAMP or log on to <http://reservations.dnr.state.md.us>



#### **PARK WATCH**

In case of emergency  
dial 911

To report a violation in  
the Park or to contact a  
Ranger call

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